

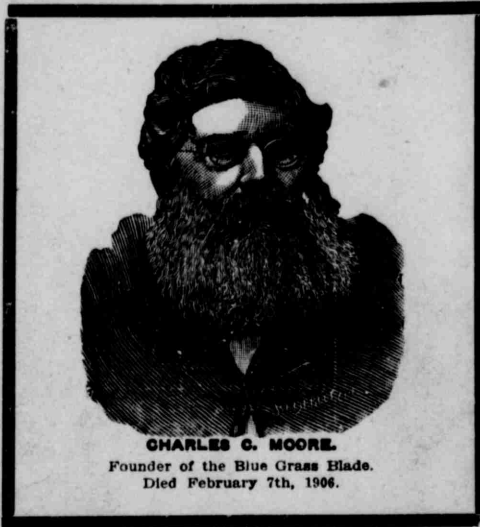
BLUE GRASS BLADE

WE AIM TO CUT DOWN ERROR AND ESTABLISH TRUTH.

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EDITORIAL

Don't ask to be excused.

First sow the seed if ye would reap.

Our human life is just what we make it.

The world has troubles of its own, don't increase them.

Freethought calls Christian sinners to repentance both by word and deed.

In this country the Christian church has become hopelessly struck in the Serbonian bogs of a brainless bigotry.

While it may be true that the Almighty got quick action on Annanias, he is probably reserving the preachers for the "wrath to come."

If the church had its way, every man and woman would be made a devout worshipper at the shrine of its Christ, not by love, but by due process of law.

The surest method of testing the value of religion is to cast it into the crucible where every assumption of science is tried by fire, and if it be true it will come forth clothed with a deathless splendor, otherwise, relegate it to the rubbish heap.

The great hope of mankind lies in a perfect union of all the mighty forces that make for the emancipation of the race. A union of all the arts and sciences, of persons and principles, admittedly good. Then will the cruel age of iron be transformed into an age of gold in which there will be neither millionaire nor mendicant, master nor slave.

If you want to degrade a people beyond redemption; if you want to transform them into contemptible peons; if you want to make of them but whin-

ing hypocrites to encumber the earth like unclean vermin, then educate them to feed on the crumbs from Dives' banquet table and take his cast-off clothing with thankfulness. Unless labor is employed, capital cannot increase, it can only concentrate. Minus employment at remunerative wages, labor is left without a lever with which to lift itself to perfect life and must sink back to barbarism.

In the stale old city of Philadelphia a man has been arrested and fined for kissing his wife on the street. It may have been the wrong place on which to have planted a kiss, but his plain duty was to have gone to Pittsburgh and there kissed somebody else's wife, and he would have found immunity from punishment.

Politics is the fine art of perverting the will of the people. Statecraft, properly understood, aims to promote it. The American woods are full of politicians with never a statesman in sight who is accorded the privileges that are due him. Consistency is a jewel not to be found in the casket of our modern Jonah's.

If the story of Genesis is to be believed, woman is the only creature extant that was not evolved out of nothing, and this is why, presumably, she usually amounts to something. Adam was made out of a hole in the atmosphere, but when it came to woman something more substantial was needed. And today, in the aggregate, she is man's mental and moral superior.

The religionists in Kentucky are doing their level best to make religion unprofitable and unpopular, but like the soldiers who are said to have crucified Christ, they "know not what they do." For some years they have needed cash to keep up the church but the fearful pleadings of the preacher combined with threats of cutting off the ecclesiastical insurance guaranteed upon paid up premiums failed to make the contribution plates even a trifle heavier by what they contained. Now they are combining to shut out all opposition and leave the people no alternative on Sunday, but the church. It is almost enough to make a man sell his extra pair of pantaloons, pawn his overcoat and hire his wife's hat for pay, then cheerfully fork over the receipts for the spread of the gospel, the promulgation of saving grace. This is the rock upon which the Lord has built his church in Kentucky.

THE WIDOW, THE BANK ROLL, THE EGOTIST.

The egotist is always a poor loser, and it is the most natural thing in the world for him to "Holler." It seldom occurs to such a one that love is a dangerous game to play and oft begun in wanton mischief, ends in madness. This is precisely what has happened to a Scotch butcher in Philadelphia, and, it serves him right.

So it happens, then, that the widow, she with the bank roll, and "such a lonesomeness," has been heard from again. It is an old, old story, and originated in Eden, or somewhere between Poker Flats and Yuba Dam. If the letters now on file in the United States Courts, carried by an Inspector who had been commissioned for that purpose, can be judged aright, the lonesome widow has not only been heard from once, but the canny Scot heard from her several times, and she from him, but the man is not alone in his distress and disappointment, for, Lo, there have been others before him and there will be many, many others after him. True, some profess to believe that the original bunco man has quit the business, but the matrimonial guay is always with us and he is here to stay.

The Philadelphia Scot must be the original sucker who is said to be reborn every ten minutes, if the news dispatches report him correctly. This time, it happens that Philadelphia is his habitat, but he is not altogether indigenous to that soil, for he flourishes everywhere and he is simply corroborative evidence of the fact that the average man considers himself the real thing.

Falling into a trap set by one of the matrimonial agencies, through the medium of an advertisement, this Philadelphia business man, who had accumulated more boodle than sense, opened up a correspondence with a New York widow who desired a "companionable husband, who will be a true helpmeet." After a few preliminaries he visited the object of his affections and found that she was, so to speak, all to the good. She kept a retinue of servants and moved about with that ease and grace which suggested plenty of ready money. It never occurred to him that a woman in such an environment had no need to cross the Hudson River in search of a helpmeet. It doesn't occur to any of them. The sucker is too self-centered. It was the most natural thing in the world to him, from his viewpoint, for a woman who was residuary legatee to a chain of retail stores and impresario to a retinue of servants, to select him from among a century's worth of eligibles, because he had a "loving disposition." Well, he dreamed and failed to wake up until he had lavished \$2,800 upon the object of his intentions, and then, the door was shut in his face. What a finale, but the awakening came too late. After this he squealed because he had lost in a game which he invited and encouraged.

IS CUBAN LIBERTY IN DANGER?

Shall Cuba lose her freedom? Is the republic on the down grade? Must their blood-bought liberty be taken from them and the people of the island absorbed by the United States under the guise of a "benevolent assimilation?"

These questions are pertinent in face of the recent rebellions uprising in the Pearl of the Antilles, but President Palma can take it for granted that Oyster Bay will not permit the revolution to last any longer than it takes the rebels to menace the trade between this country and Cuba. While Oyster Bay has not been heard from anent the uprising, it will not be so long as the uprising confines itself to a few isolated districts and accomplishes nothing worse than the shooting of a few rural guards on lonely highways. Theodore Roosevelt, however, will not long tolerate a guerilla warfare, as the elastic Platt amendment was framed to meet just such an emergency, although out of international courtesy we professed, at the time, that it was foreign aggression that we feared most. Nothing was said about the operation of the Monroe doctrine, supposing that did not go far enough.

From this viewpoint it is not possible for Cuba to indulge in any of those South American revolutions, which, like a mushroom, spring up in a night. If it did, the uprising would not be made worthy of mention in history, and yet, it may be in reality, the beginning of the end. Tomas Estrada Palma may be the last as well as the first Cuban president. Left to a vote of its own people, Cuba would, doubtless, decline to become a part of the United States, but should the crisis come the Cubans will have just about as much voice in the matter as the Filipinos had. Spain was driven out of Cuba because she had created conditions that were intolerable to American trade and commerce? Then would not that commerce be just as badly crippled by a revolution? And is not the United States, in a way, responsible for the republic of Cuba and a standing guarantee of her peace and quietude? Then note how easy it is for the imperial party in America and the annexation party in Cuba to foment internecine strife in the little republic, for the mere privilege of undertaking a pretended consistent intervention by military force and Congressional decree of ultimate annexation.

Some few years ago the prophecy was made that those Americans residing in Cuba would sooner or later stir up strife for the sole and only purpose of giving the United States an excuse for "benevolently assimilating" the island and its people. While this does not appear to be the case just now, yet the excuse is at hand ready for use. Can it be possible that such an event is a probability and that we have given Cuba her freedom for the mere pleasure of wresting it from her again by forcing her to become an adjunct of this republic?

Political freedom is as dear to any people as religious freedom and it is to be devoutly hoped that the sober judgment of the Cuban people will prevail to enable them to continue in the enjoyment of that liberty which belongs to them by right.

A FEW PLAIN FACTS

But few of our subscribers have written upon the subject of the proposed increase in the price of subscription, but interested friends have communicated with us, advising against the step, in that the tendency is now to popularize literature of all kinds, especially liberal literature, as an inducement towards an increased circulation which naturally carries with it a wider circle of readers thereby enhancing the opportunities for human advancement.

These are precisely the views entertained by the Blade. We have been bitterly opposed to making any increase in the annual subscription and our hope has been that we might cheapen it still further could a larger circulation be assured for we prefer ten thousand subscribers at one dollar each, to a smaller subscription list at a higher rate. The former would result in far greater good and all that the Blade asks is a fair living from its publication. It is not our desire to make money. Could we be assured of the ability to meet current expenses and live, we would never sanction any increase in the subscription rate. This has been tried, however, and in vain. Even with the clubs of five at 50 each and our constant appeals for a stronger effort to secure new subscribers, the result has not been flattering. We are, therefore, confronted with two alternatives, namely, either to increase the price, or cut down the cost of publication which means to reduce the paper in some way. We cannot entertain the thought of the latter alternative for the Blade must not only live, but it must maintain a high standard as a Freethought publication and we would rather ask our subscribers for fifty cents a year additional than impair the paper.

One of our friends offers a suggestion which is feasible, provided it can be put into effective operation. His letter appears in another column of this issue. It is that a given number of Freethinkers agree to donate five dollars a year to the Blade with the understanding that extra copies of the paper should be sent out for one half the amount each week. As it is the circulation we mostly desire, the Blade would be willing to mail out extra copies for the entire amount thus subscribed as the total receipts would thus be enhanced and the cost of each individual paper thereby decreased. But can it be done? Other papers have tried the same experiment and failed, hence, we opine the

Blade would meet with a similar experience. Theories will not pay for the publication of any paper. There is too much practicality about the business.

While on this subject, it would be well to be honest with our readers and lay the facts before them. The Blade now enjoys a circulation slightly in excess of 3,000 copies. When our late editor passed away and his hand was taken from the helm, many, who had taken the paper for his sake alone, ceased to subscribe for it longer. Happily their places were taken by others who found a new charm about the Blade so that the circulation has maintained its standing. Of the 3,000 subscribers more than one-half are delinquent, so this leaves us with less than 1,500 paid up. Some of these renew on the fifty-cent club plan which cuts down the annual revenue of the paper to something like \$1,000 per year. The receipts from advertising are practically nil as our readers can very well determine. With these figures before them our readers and the Liberals, generally, may know just what we have to contend with.

It is when we reach the cost of publication that the saddest portion of this story must be told. Counting the cost of setting 24 columns of type, the press work, the folding and mailing, the cost of the paper, the ink, the mail charges, to say nothing of rent, light and power, brings the total average cost of publishing the paper each week to about \$40.00. Multiply that sum by 52, the number of weeks in each year, and we get \$2080.00, a sum larger than we actually receive, so that the new editor of the Blade is compelled to dive into his jeans for the balance of the money needed which he earns by job printing, and as for his services to the paper, the hours of labor, the midnight toil, all becomes a labor of love absolutely without compensation or reward, other than good-will, good-fellowship and cheer. True these sentiments are desirable, but they do not buy bread. These are the conditions we have to face and this is why the alternatives above suggested are confronting us.

From this, it will be seen, and we trust our friends will not misjudge us, that it is necessary to increase the subscription rather than let the Blade be published on a cheaper plan.

SUNDAY OBSERVANCE IN LEXINGTON

The cloven foot has made its appearance in Lexington, and, as might have been expected, it came in priestly garb. With such a captain and a crew such as only he can procure, it is small wonder that Lexingtonians imagine that the city is going rapidly to the devil.

Only a few months ago the church advocates set up a brilliant argument for the closing of saloons on Sunday, an argument based solely upon the physical needs of man, demanding one day in each week free from evil contaminations and innocent amusement. On its face this argument is a good one and there is naught in it to which any sensible, reasoning person can seriously object. But no sooner had official sanction been given to the Sunday closing of the saloons, than the church began to demand and insist upon a Sunday attendance at church, thereby revealing the cloven foot beneath. No sooner had the parks been thrown open and music furnished for the Sunday recreation of the people, even before the last peal of children's laughter had died away and the last note of the music had melted into the throbbing atmosphere, than the religious busybodies began to term it, through hidden sentences, as a desecration of the Sabbath (and a pretence of "Worshipping god in Nature."

As a general rule the Catholic and Episcopalian clergy are not as prone as the ordained representatives of the other sects to interfere with the rights and privilege of the citizen. When the Catholic worshipper has been to mass and that mass is over the Sunday is practically over and the priest cares not to exercise any further control over his actions for the balance of that day. The Catholic's religion has been fully conserved by his attendance at mass and the remainder of the day is his own. With the Episcopal church there has been little tendency toward religious intolerance in America, but with the other sects, it has been vastly different. And right here it can be truthfully said that only bigotry, born of ignorance and nursed by insolence will presume to dictate to an American citizen how he shall spend his Sunday. If he wishes for the green fields where he can enjoy seeing his babies roll in childish glee, that is his business and nobody on the face of the earth has a right to say to him, nay.

This time, the Blade regrets to say, the complaint of desecrating the Sabbath comes from W. T. Capers, Dean of Christ Church Cathedral. The Blade had looked upon him, judged by his published sermons, as a man of broad and liberal mind, save for its credal influences. Seizing the opportunity at a non-sectarian religious gathering, held in a place of public meeting, he took occasion to refer to the recent closing of the saloons on Sunday and the news-papers, in reporting his sermon, quote him as saying:

"We hear much talk of the closing of the saloons and gambling dens on Sunday, and we should all be thankful to God for the stand that our Governor and Mayor have taken. But their efforts will be

(Continued on Page 4, first column.)